

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge among a plurality of user terminals comprising the steps of:

10 originating an internet protocol call using session initiation protocol among the plurality of user terminals;

negotiating by the plurality of user terminals a common bearer format among the plurality of user terminals; and

15 coupling a data input/output of each of the plurality of user terminals to a conference bridge.

20 2. The method for voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of coupling includes the step of coupling the plurality of user terminals to a packet switched conference bridge.

25 3. The method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of negotiating includes the step of finding a least common denominator bearer format among the plurality of user terminals.

30 4. The method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of negotiating further includes the step of determining whether the plurality of user terminals support multiple bearer formats.

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5. The method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 4, wherein the step of determining includes the steps of:

negotiating a homogeneous bearer format among
5 the plurality of user terminals which have multiple bearer formats;

determining whether a common bearer format exists among the plurality of user terminals; and

canceling the step of coupling the plurality
10 of user terminals.

6. The method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 5, wherein there is further included the step of coupling the plurality
15 of user terminals with homogeneous bearer formats.

7. The method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 4, wherein if the plurality of user terminals supports multiple bearer
20 formats, there is further included the steps of:

transmitting by each of said plurality of user terminals in a native bearer format; and

each of said plurality of user terminals receiving a bearer format of others of said plurality
25 of user terminals and converting the received bearer format to the native bearer format for use by each of the plurality of user terminals.

8. The method for a voice over internet protocol conference bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein the
30 step of originating includes the steps of:

originating an internet call between a first party and a second party of said plurality of user terminals;

35 negotiating a common bearer format between the first party and the second party;

originating an internet call to a third party
by the first party;

negotiating a common bearer format between
the first party and the third party; and

5 repeating the steps of originating,
negotiating and coupling between the first party and
another party for each of the plurality of user
terminals.

10 9. The method for a voice over internet protocol
conference bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein the
step of coupling includes the steps of:

receiving by the conference bridge an
origination from a first party of the plurality of user
15 terminals, said origination indicating other parties of
the plurality of user terminals to be coupled for data
transfer;

originating by the conference bridge a
coupling to each of the other parties of the plurality
20 of user terminals; and

sending a message to each of the plurality of
user terminals establishing a data connection of the
data input/output of each of the plurality of user
terminals.

25 10. In a user terminal, a method for a voice over
internet protocol conference bridge among a plurality
of user terminals comprising the steps of:

originating by the user terminal an internet
30 protocol call using session initiation protocol among
the plurality of user terminals;

negotiating by the user terminal and the
plurality of user terminals a common bearer format
among the user terminal and the plurality of user
35 terminals; and

transmitting by each of said plurality of user terminals in a native bearer format; and

each of said plurality of user terminals receiving a bearer format of others of said plurality of user terminals and converting the received bearer format to the native bearer format for use by the user terminal.

16. A conference bridge apparatus for voice over internet protocol among a plurality of user terminals comprising:

a signaling coupling among the plurality of user terminals, the signaling coupling using session initiation protocol via an internet;

means for negotiating a common bearer format among the plurality of user terminals, said means for negotiating coupled to at least one of said plurality of said user terminals; and

a data coupling among each of the plurality of user terminals through a conference bridge.

17. The conference bridge apparatus as claimed in claim 16, wherein at least one of said plurality of user terminals includes a mobile hand set.

18. The conference bridge apparatus as claimed in claim 16, wherein at least one of said plurality of user terminals includes a hard wired processor.

19. The conference bridge arrangement as claimed in claim 16, wherein the signaling coupling includes an internet protocol coupling among the plurality of user terminals.

20. The conference bridge arrangement as claimed in claim 16 wherein the signaling coupling includes an

internet protocol using session initiation protocol coupling among each of the plurality of user terminals.

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